ISSN 0712-7774

CEREBUS

JAKA'S STORY 21

$2.00 USA ● $2.50 CANADA ● £1 UK

134
MAY

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

Amuse your Muse
but don't
Abuse your Muse
or you'll
Lose your Muse.

CEREBUS

NO. 134 MAY 1990

DAVE SIM
President

GERHARD
Vice-President

MONIQUE KAPTEIN
Administrative Assistant

JAKA'S STORY
a novel

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PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 114)

•

POGROM'S PROGRESS
(Cerebus 115 to
Cerebus 119)

•

THE POET
(Cerebus 120 to
Cerebus 130)

•

**MYSTERY
ACHIEVEMENT**
(Cerebus 131 to
Cerebus 136)

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CEREBUS IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY AARDVARK-VANAHEIM INC. P.O. BOX 1674 STN. C KITCHENER ONTARIO CANADA N2G 4R2

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PRINTED IN CANADA BY **PRENEY PRINT & LITHO INC.**, WINDSOR, ONTARIO.

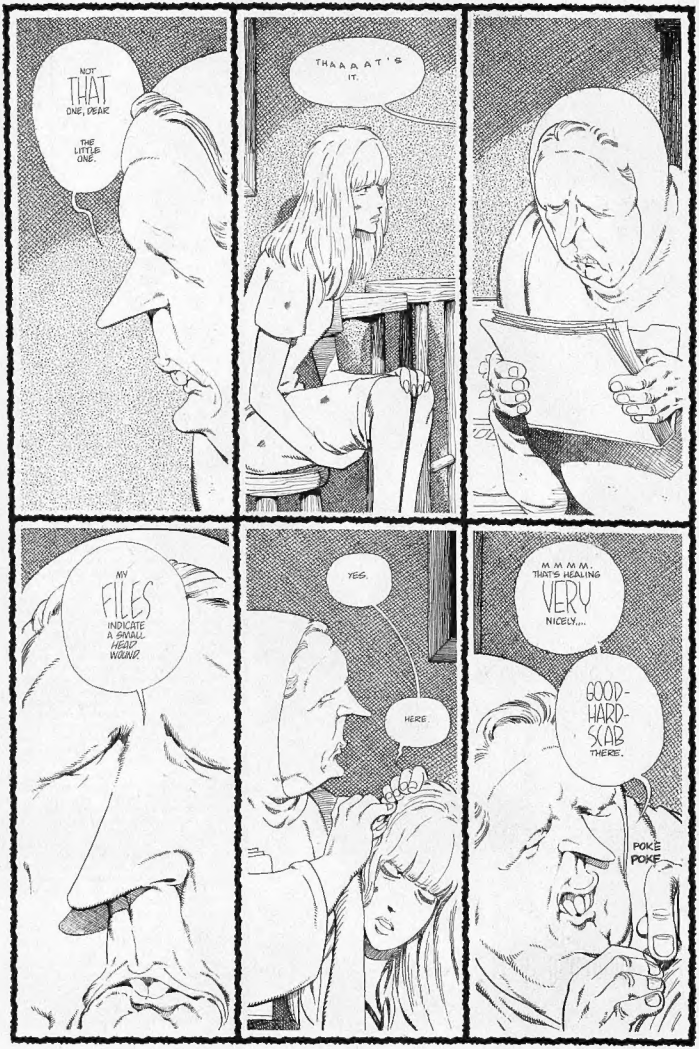
PRINTED IN CANADA

WHEN SHE RECALLED those last, listless days in Palnu, it was that view from her dining room she remembered most clearly: the swooping flights of migratory birds; the delicate brush strokes of autumnal hues like those in pictures crafted by Shen artisans, splashed across the line of distant deciduous foliage which demarcated city and country-side; the implacable evergreens and the brown and brittle leaves fallen, wreath-like, at the base of the sculpted hedges and shrubbery; the unnaturally clear sky and the unseasonably warm winds.

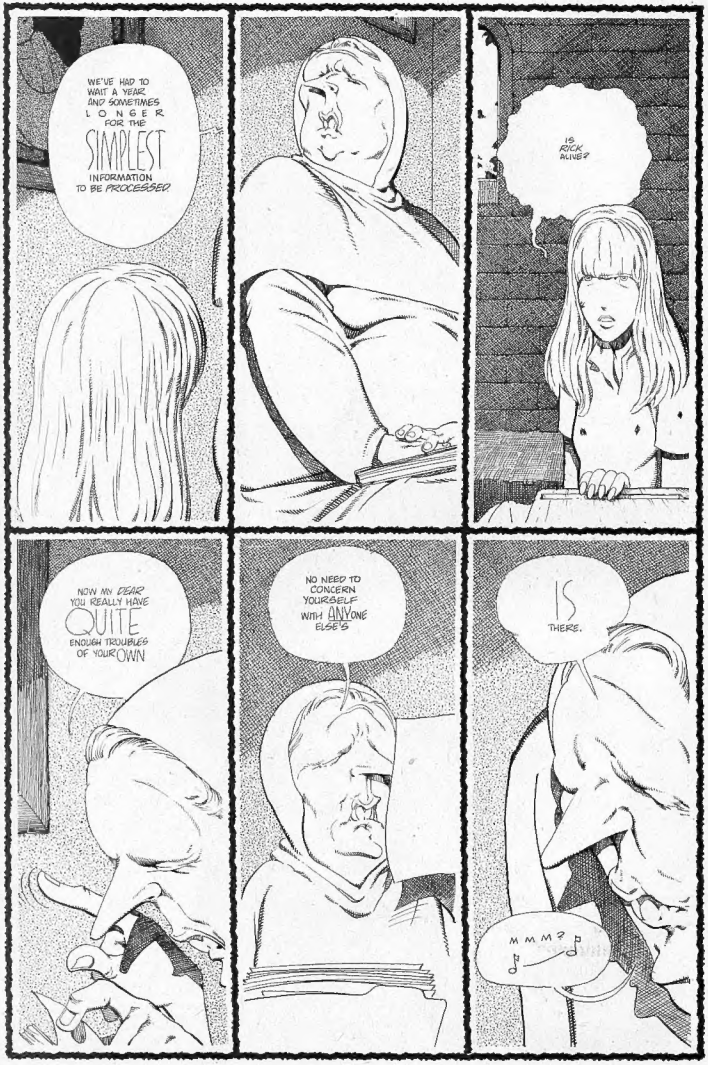
The tin whistle and the beer coupons had, at last, provoked from her another attempt at correspondence which was acknowledged in a matter of days by an official-looking response drafted by the Senior Housekeeper on Ministry of Defence stationery thanking her for her recent communication and exhorting Jaka to always avoid waxy yellow build-up on her floors and to maintain overland routes to front-line forces wherever possible. A further attempt to reach her uncle was rewarded by a sheet of blue onion-skin stationery which advised "No directory by that name. Please consult your department."

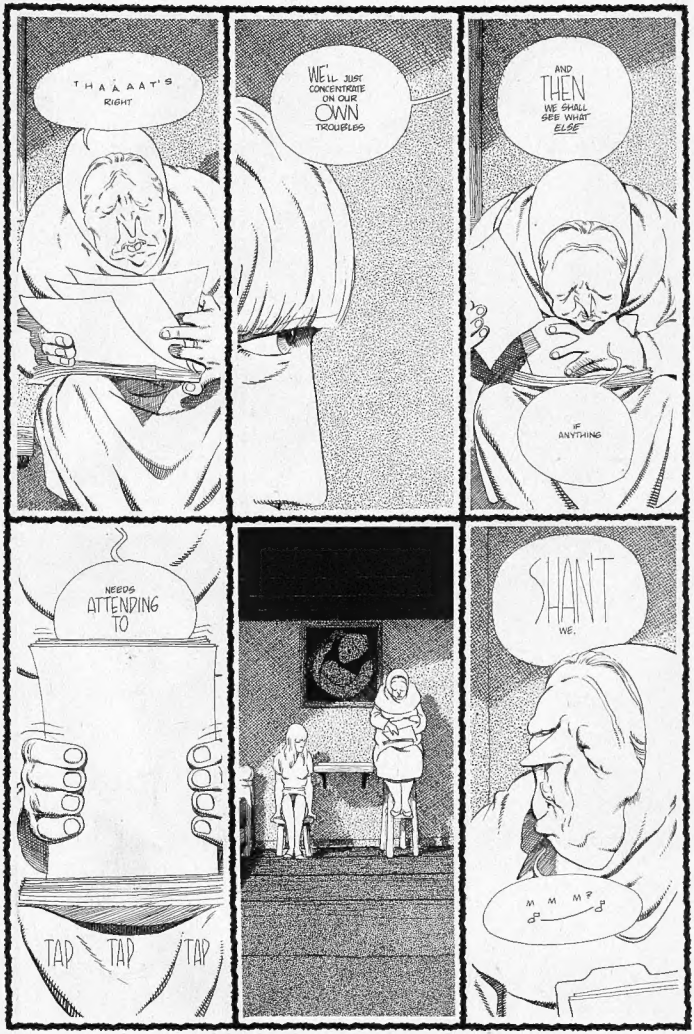
As her twelfth birthday approached, the skies began to darken early in the afternoon and the evenings grew chill and damp. Still she kept her vigil over the unchanging environment before her. The frost lingered into mid-morning embroidering lawns and garden beds, the stillness unbroken save for the bustle and clatter of those caretakers charged with making ready the grounds for the imminent winter months.

She remembered, most particularly, watching a lone figure in the distance, securing tarpaulins of Palnu's ubiquitous burlap over the least hardy of the miniature Shen trees and found herself wishing (for no readily apparent reason) that someone might do the same for her; that some covering might be found which could enfold her and keep her safe from whatever uncertain events the future held in store.


NOT THAT ONE, DEAR
THE LITTLE ONE.
THAAAAT'S IT.
MY FILES INDICATE A SMALL HEAD WOUND
YES.
HERE.
M M M M. THAT'S HEALING VERY NICELY,...
GOOD-HARD-SCAB THERE.
POKE
POKE

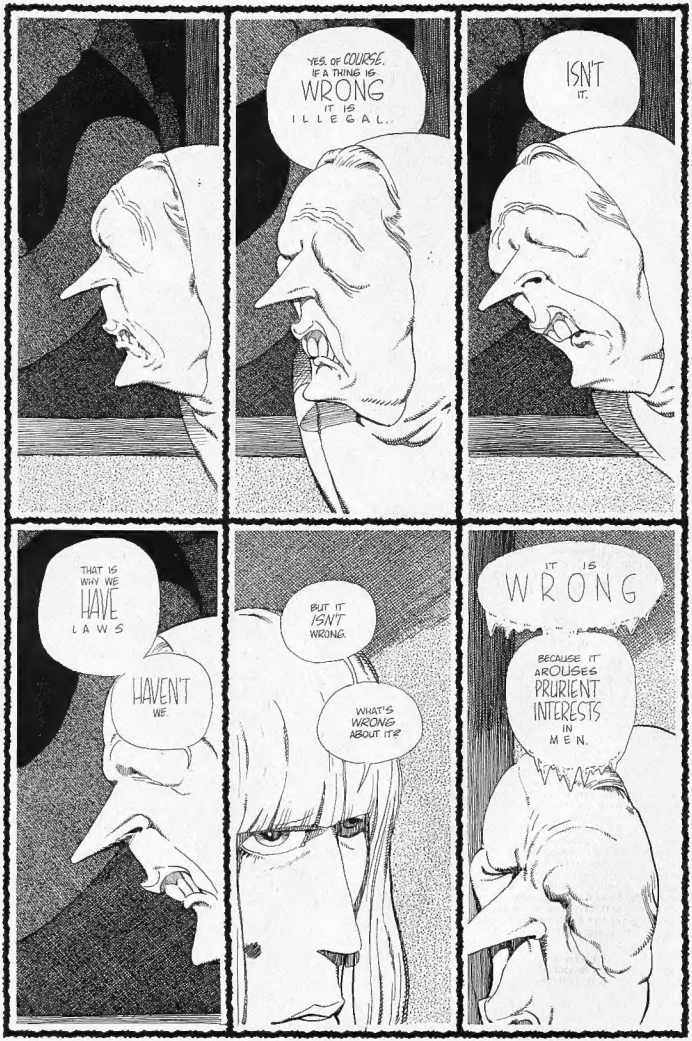
YOU DON'T PICK AT IT SO YOU?
NO. NEVER...
GOOD GIRL...
THIS WON'T TAKE US LONG MISS. NASH
I'D FIRST LIKE TO SAY THAT YOUR PRESENCE HERE HAS BEEN A GREAT HELP TO US
WITH OUR PALNU CASE LOAD...
YOUR UNCLE
I'M AFRAID
DOES NOT TAKE HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AT ALL SERIOUSLY...


WE'VE HAD TO WAIT A YEAR, AND SOMETIMES L O N G E R FOR THE SIMPLEST INFORMATION TO BE PROCESSED.
IS RICK ALIVE?
NOW MY DEAR YOU REALLY HAVE QUITE ENOUGH TROUBLES OF YOUR OWN
NO NEED TO CONCERN YOURSELF WITH ANYONE ELSE'S
IS THERE.
MMM?


THAAAAT'S RIGHT
WE'LL JUST CONCENTRATE ON OUR OWN TROUBLES
AND THEN WE SHALL SEE WHAT ELSE IF ANYTHING
NEEDS ATTENDING TO
TAP TAP TAP
SHAN'T WE.
M M M?

THAAAT'S RIGHT
NOW.
THE FIRST THING WE REQUIRE IS A SIGNED ADMISSION OF WRONG DOING
THERE'S A PENCIL ON YOUR SIDE THERE
YOU JUST SIGN YOUR NAME IN THE LITTLE SPACE AT THE BOTTOM ...
THIS SAYS DANCING IS WRONG
THAAAT'S RIGHT, DEAR.

BUT I DON'T BELIEVE THAT.
WHETHER YOU BELIEVE IT OR NOT IS IMMATERIAL, MY DEAR.
IT IS TRUE
DANCING IS WRONG
IT'S ILLEGAL
I KNOW THAT


YES, OF COURSE. IF A THING IS WRONG IT IS ILLEGAL.
ISN'T IT.
THAT IS WHY WE HAVE LAWS
HAVEN'T WE.
BUT IT ISN'T WRONG.
WHAT'S WRONG ABOUT IT?
IT IS WRONG
BECAUSE IT AROUSES PRURIENT INTERESTS IN MEN.

THE MORNING OF her twelfth birthday, the child was soaking even longer than was usual in her pink marble tub, running her toes lightly along the pink, tortoiseshell designs inlaid in its surface just below the water-line, when she was startled from her reverie by the sound of Nurse calling her name (quite loudly, indeed) from the living room

"I'm bathing," she replied (not half so loudly but in the Aristocratic Imperative; a tone which she used to signal the preclusion of debate of any kind). So it was (that she was surprised and not a little annoyed when she heard her name repeated even more loudly (as unlikely as that might seem) and was about to reply in like fashion when some small inflection in Nurse's voice roused within her both anxiety and curiousity. Not bothering to dry herself, she seized a towel and, in a few quick steps, was at her Nurse's side in the living room. With trembling hand, her guardian thrust toward her a sheet of rich, cream-coloured parchment. Jaka made a soft feline sound as her mouth and eyes widened slowly and for several seconds the two stood, immobile; Jaka regarding the paper trembling in her hand and Nurse contemplating Jaka. Such was the character of their preoccupation that they were both oblivious to the puddles widening on the hand-woven T'capmin carpet. The paper read, very simply

A reception
in honour of
your birthday

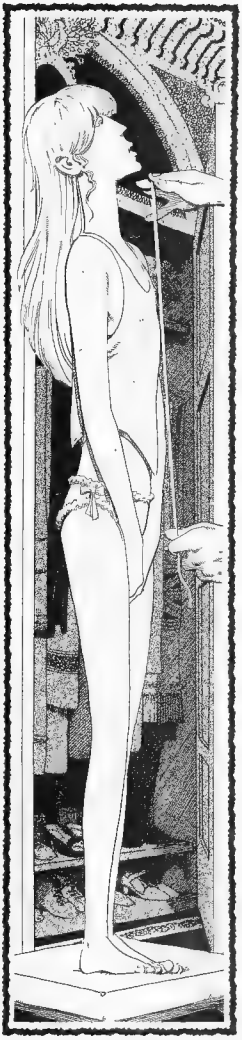
Office of the Grandlord
this evening.

DROPPING THE invitation at her feet and seizing the towel with both hands, she raced back to her bedroom; spouting commands and drying herself as she went. Nurse hastened off in the direction of the kitchen, clutching the invitation and her heart in her right and left hands (respectively) to forestall the former's possible disappearance and the latter's cessation of function.

Furiously, Jaka combed and dried her hair; great handsful until fear of an unbecoming *coiffure* overcame her sense of urgency and she began combing and drying it strand by strand as was her custom. Still drying each length and re-moistening the ends as she combed through her tresses, she managed to struggle into her underwear and open wide all six of her closet doors. Her eyes darted back and forth across the ten meters of tightly packed dresses and skirts and blouses as she mentally began combining and re-combining colours, shapes and patterns. Throwing caution to the wind, she decided to sacrifice that month's clothing allowance (and some of the *following* month's if need be!) in the purchase of a single gown. She bellowed for Nurse, who stumbled into the bedroom still applying polish to her charge's finest *chausseurs de soirée*. Jaka named three of Palma's best fashion establishments (which had her measurements on file) and commanded that Nurse show them the invitation and request that each deliver their finest gown within the hour; its cost not to exceed the equivalent of two months' clothing allowance. Nurse glanced, helplessly, at the elegant black leather sandal in her hand.

"You can finish that later," snapped Jaka and Nurse was gone from the room, her footsteps retreating quickly and quietly from the child's presence.

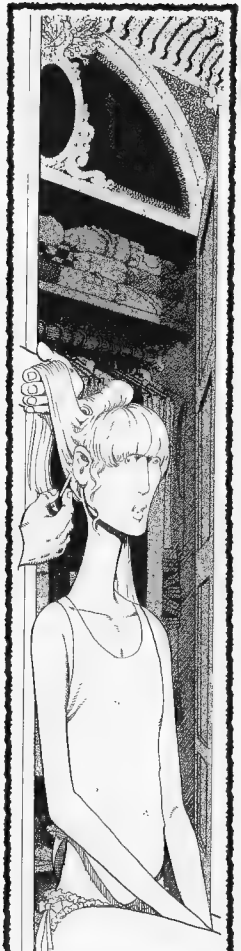
Jaka had just resumed the drying and combing of her hair and was regarding her damp bangs (from her vantage point; slightly below and behind them) with ill-concealed disgust, whereupon a commotion arose at the front door. She heard Nurse upbraiding someone in her best authoritarian manner and, so, thought nothing of the interruption until, *quite* implausibly, she heard the voices drawing closer; the very least and uncertain-sounding of them belonging to Nurse herself! More impossible still, the voices were suddenly and audibly outside her very bedroom door and the door-handle itself was turning!



IS THIS SHE? queried a large, red faced gentleman, bursting into the room, flanked by three smaller (but no less earnest) younger fellows. As if in a dream she watched her Nurse, eyes downcast, nod meekly. The man who had spoken drew himself up to his full height (a sight to inspire great awe), regarded her from beneath the single largest eyebrow Jaka had ever seen, snapped his fingers three times over a nearby footstool, and said "up, up, up" as if addressing a trained circus animal. Too shocked to demure and unsettled by Nurse's own humble acquiescence, Jaka stepped carefully onto the footstool, crossing her hands over the front of her cotton panties and blushing worriedly. For several minutes the large, florid gentleman, murmuring angrily to himself, snapped his tape measure first this way then that, barking out measurements which one of his companions noted in a small book even as the other two circled her, their visages somber, silent but for the scratch-scratch-scratching of charcoal on the sketch-pads held before them in mutually white-knuckled grasps.

"Four hours . . . *quinze pouces* . . . he gives me to create . . . *vingt pouces* . . . a finished gown. Just *once* ! . . . *vingt trois pouces* . . . wish he would say . . . *quatorze et quatorze* . . . take a month! Take . . . *dix sept pouces* . . . three months if you need them!"

His two grim companions who had reached a crescendo of furious rendering as he spoke, ceased their labours abruptly (and in unison) and began madly shuffling the finished works between them, marking and slashing at one another's designs, wordlessly tearing and matching up halves and fragments of pages, clipping and gluing them in place until, at last, the results were held up for the florid gentleman's approval. He paused half a moment (a wave traversing his eyebrow solitary from left to right), growled low in his throat, nodded once, and the four intruders swept from the room leaving Jaka and Nurse mute and wide eyed, the young girl still awaiting permission to step down from her perch.



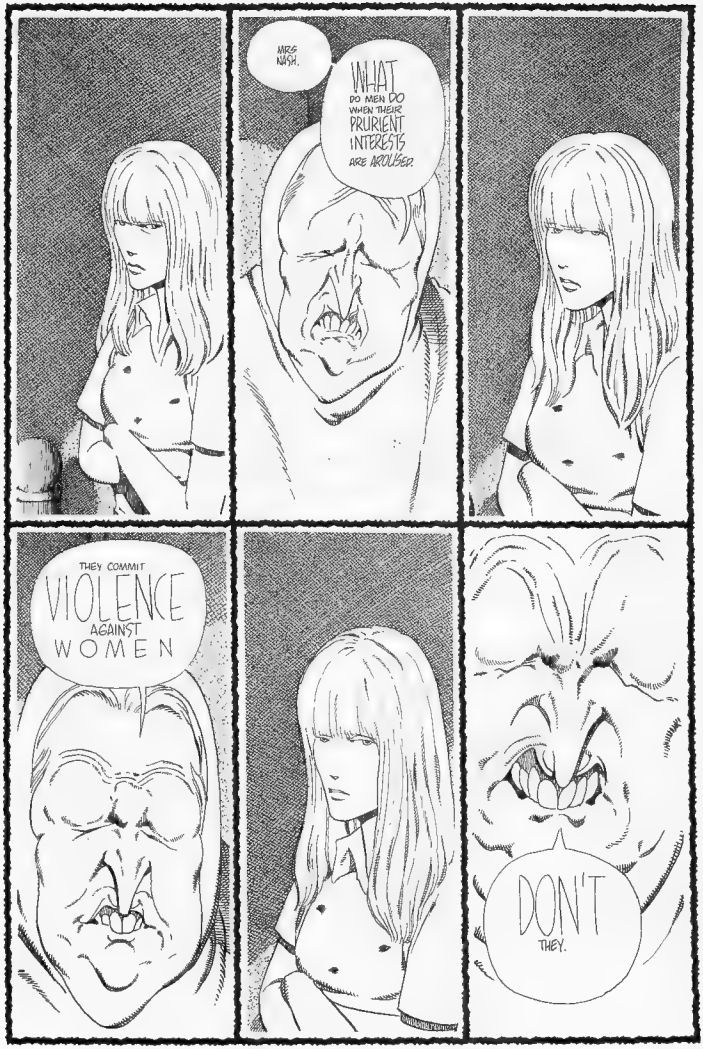
SHE HAD VERY nearly decided that descent might be achieved without serious consequence and had (tentatively) slid her right foot slightly forward of her left, when a second clamour arose from the direction of the outer corridor. With nary a nursely obstacle to impede his progress, the doorway was almost instantly filled by a shorter, stouter figure, asymetrically posed, a large black valise having dislocated his torso and head to a point several inches to the right of perpendicular.

"*There* you are," he sighed, as if at the conclusion of some life-long quest which had led him to some distant, self-evident and hitherto (inexplicably) unguessed location. Snapping his fingers a single time, he gestured sharply at the stool beneath her feet. 'Sit,' he said, and Jaka complied. In the next instant she felt his hands plunge from either side, into the damp tapestry which was her hair; his nails pressing lightly at the flesh behind her ears; pulling back and under to the point of bone at the base of her skull; then executing a series of smooth plucks and pinches (like a cat readying its bed) along the scalp's nether frontier and regions. He held small handsful out from her head at odd angles allowing each, in its turn, to restore itself to its place among its fellows; whereupon he pronounced his judgement ('perfect') to no-one in particular and, opening his valise, selected a large black comb of carnivorous aspect, then a smaller instrument wrought with blunt spikes and began threshing the two through the hair over her right ear with a light chopping motion in the manner of a *chef du salade* preparing a sufficient portion for a modest appetite.

As he worked, his hands tucking and pinning, plucking and rolling, shaving and trimming, the carpet around him adorned by those instruments of his trade; he launched into a lengthy and lively monologue alternately extolling and deprecating the tonsorial attributes of Palmu's Great Ladies. Each portion of his narrative dove-tailed smoothly into place between its antecedent and its successor, so that after a time a logical progression became apparent; the sum *and* its parts having as theme and moral the paramount importance of well-styled hair and the inherent futility of an ill-groomed existence. His soliloquy had all the power and mesmerism of any well-rehearsed rhetoric and he held his *auditeurs a deux* in thrall as he brought his final anecdote (concerning itself with the Deserved Fate of a Woman of Means who had ended her days wracked by the symptoms of some unmentionable malady of the scalp and, to a lesser extent, a broken heart; all for want of an effective cream rinse) to a rousing and dramatic conclusion even as he repacked his valise, snapping it shut with a flourish.

"Now *don't move* or *I won't be responsible*," he admonished and was gone in a trice, leaving Jaka and her Nurse blinking uncertainly at one another; neither willing to budge until they could be certain if the command had been directed at them both, or Jaka alone.

"How are they going to get my undershirt off?" Jaka whispered. And they sat that way for many hours, contemplating all the myriad possibilities, until they were both quite glum

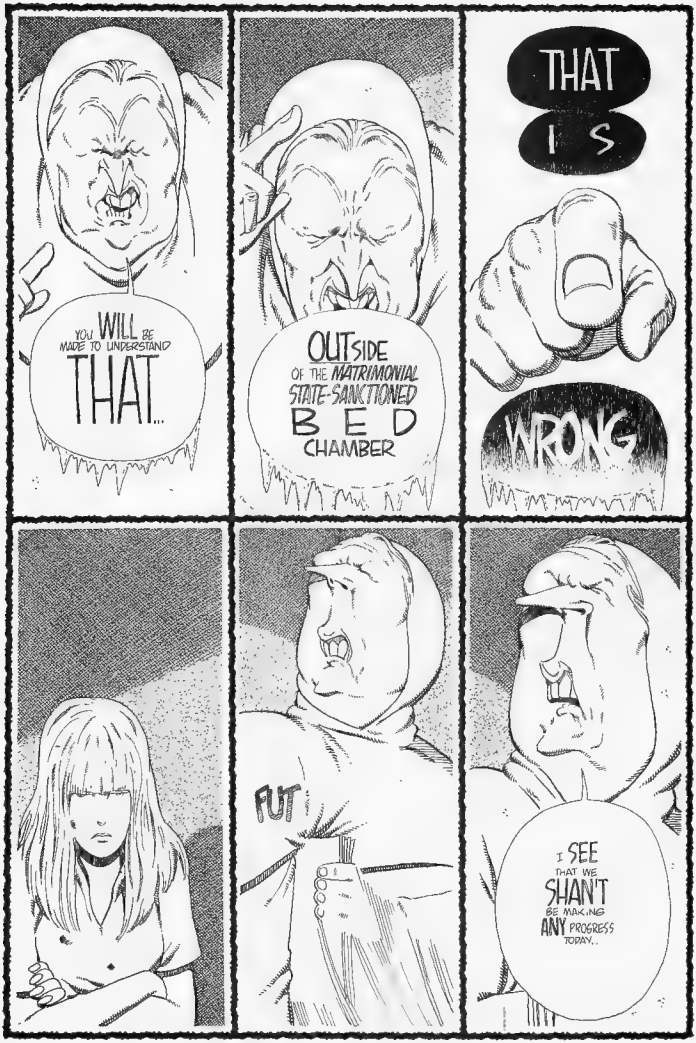

MRS NASH.
WHAT DO MEN DO WHEN THEIR PRURIENT INTERESTS ARE AROUSED
THEY COMMIT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
DON'T THEY.

AND YOU UNDERSTAND THAT THAT IS WRONG
DON'T YOU
THAT'S NOT WHY THEY WATCH ME DANCE..
THEY CONSUME ALCOHOL
AND THEY OGLE YOUR EXPOSED BREASTS
AND YOUR BUTTOCKS UNTIL THEY...

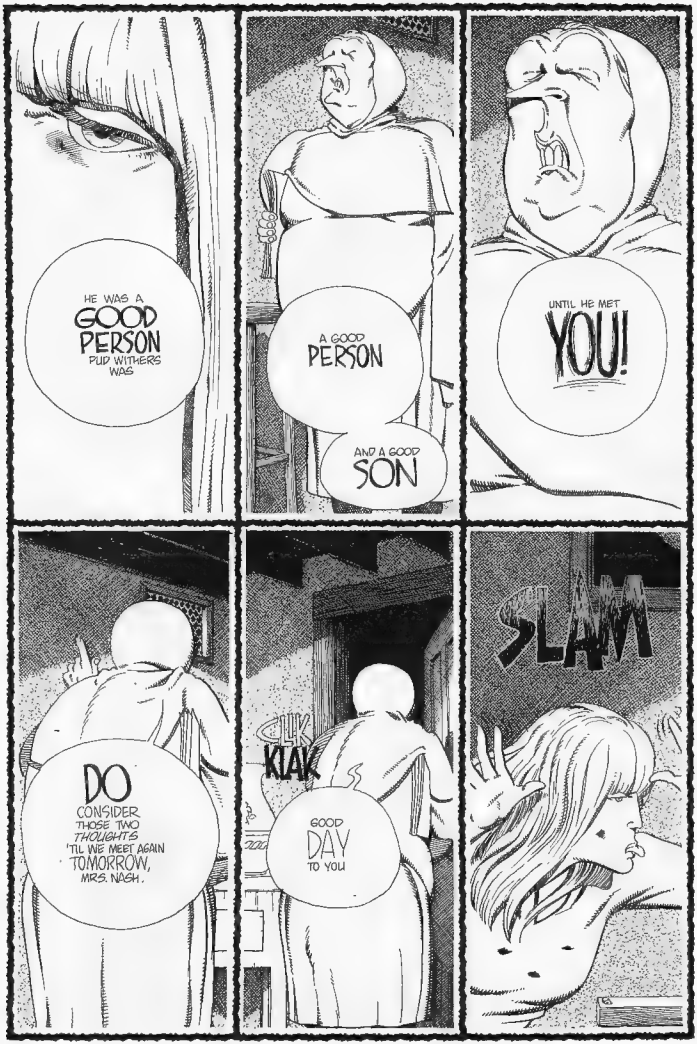
OH SURE...
WELL, I'M PRETTY
OR
OR THEY THINK I AM
SO
SO THEY
THEY
WHY
DO YOU WEAR LESS CLOTHING WHEN YOU DANCE, MRS. NASH

BECAUSE!
BECAUSE DANCING
DANCING IS DONE WITH THE ARMS AND LEGS
THEY HAVE TO BE ABLE TO SEE
TO SEE MY..

IT'S AN ART.
POPPY COCK!....
YOU AROUSE LEWD INTERESTS IN STRANGE MEN
THAT'S NOT WHY I DANCE
YOUR INTENTIONS ARE NOT AT ISS-YEW HERE MRS. NASH
CONFINE YOURSELF TO THE ISS-YEW PLEASE
DANCING AROUSES MEN
AND!


YOU WILL BE MADE TO UNDERSTAND THAT...
OUTSIDE OF THE MATRIMONIAL STATE-SANCTIONED BED CHAMBER
THAT IS WRONG
I SEE THAT WE SHAN'T BE MAKING ANY PROGRESS TODAY..
FUT

AND SO I WILL LEAVE YOU WITH TWO THOUGHTS ...
THE FIRST.
WHILE YOU HAVE BEEN GRANTED IMPROVED ACCOMODATIONS
SUCH IMPROVEMENT IS NOT NECESSARILY PERMANENT.
THE SECOND.
REMEMBER YOU ARE A SELF CONFESSED FELON
DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF YOUR EMPLOYER


HE WAS A GOOD PERSON PUD WITHERS WAS
A GOOD PERSON
AND A GOOD SON
UNTIL HE MET YOU!
DO CONSIDER THOSE TWO THOUGHTS 'TIL WE MEET AGAIN TOMORROW, MRS. NASH.
CLIK KLAK
GOOD DAY TO YOU
SLAM

WHEN AT LAST the florid gentleman returned, his two asssociates carrying the tissue-wrapped results of their afternoon's work, he withdrew a pair of large, heavy scissors form his waistcoat and, seizing the undershirt in his left hand, cut it in two and hurled it into a nearby corner.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave,
Have you seen my bong?
your pal,
Charles Dikas
3612 Woodland Dr.
Cleveland, TN
USA 37311

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,
Consider this a thank you. For years your attitudes about creators rights and personal freedoms have had a tremendous influence on me, and they've finally taken a strong enough hold for me to have done something about it. Enclosed is what came of allowing myself to create the kind of book I should have been doing years ago.
STRIPS is based on my experiences in college, and is a novel in the same format as Jaka's Story or High Society. The story runs about forty issues or so and then finishes. It's a self-contained tale that can't be judged (except superficially) on an issue by issue basis, and once it's finished, I'll move on to something else.
I can't describe the joy of doing a comic this way, particularly after having toiled in the salt mines of mainstream (DC being the saltiest) for too long a time. I don't know if I'll make a fortune off this, or struggle forever, but I'm going to enjoy the shit out of it either way, and for that I owe you a debt of gratitude that can probably never be re-paid for simply hanging in there and waving your flag.
Thanks again, and take care.
Sincerely,
Chuck Austen
2284 Maywood
San Jose, CA
USA 95128

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave and Gerhard,
Cerebus is a most impressive piece of literature, if I could possibly judge the work before it is finished. The art and story are both top-notch, which is somewhat difficult to find in the genre of comic books. (Could we change the name of the medium in which *Cerebus* and items like it are produced to something that is a little less juvenile? Yeah, they're books, but some of them aren't really comic in any way. What should it be? I don't know, something like "illustrated narratives," or "wordz 'n' pix"? Whaddaya think?) (I'm a personal fan of parenthetical expressions, but that's just the way I think.)
I'm writing this on the day that I purchased Jaka's Story 17, and let me just say that ". . . artistic license . . ." was intensely witty and made me laugh out loud. Just one question: when does the lead Cirinist reload her crossbow to shoot Pud? Just curious. It doesn't halt the narrative like a blatant advertisement in a movie, but upon review, it does concern me just a little.
Have you given any consideration to trying to export *Cerebus* to, say, Japan? I guess it would be a little harder for a modest little organization like yours to make it profitable. What do you think of the veritable plethora of Japanese comix now on the American scene?
How much more would hardcover editions of the collections with better binding cost?
So full of questions, there seems not to be an end to them. But when I have the attention of a genius for a just a few moments, I want to take advantage of the situation and try to get just a little bit of the genius' wisdom.
Ultimately, what is the underlying phenomena of writing letters to the creator/writer/artist of a work like Cerebus, and what does it tell us about your readers? Anyone who wants to use this as a thesis for a paper, go right ahead. Is it a sort of therapy for both the letter writer, you and/or the reader? Does the very act of revealing one's self before a great artist and 25,000 of his fans in fact release some stresses which one is under at the moment?To sit down and write a letter to a total stranger, revealing inner thoughts (as opposed to outer thoughts) and spilling one's guts onto a page for everyone to see, could possibly be construed to indicate some disorder of the mind. Then again, who among us can claim not to have a disorder of the mind? If not disorder, then dat order. No, I didn't study psychology in college, but an equally humorous subject, physics. I didn't say either of them are inherently funny, just that they are about the same, funnyness-wise. Even though I've alienated a bunch of your readers, I do think, to their credit, they are probably the smartest, sanest people on the planet. Doesn't say much, I know, Look at the elected leaders of the United States.
Great comic, I'm with ya 'til 300.
Behrnt Aaberg
2517 N. St. Louis
Chicago, Ill
USA 60647

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,
Re: Jaka's Story 17/Cerebus #130:
JESUS H. TAPDANCING FUCKING CHRIST!! I mean, God! Here I was thinking Jaka's Story was going to be a quaint little mental stroll through the park to give us a little breather before things get rolling again in "Melmoth" and hit full tilt in "Mothers and Daughters", but, shit, in twenty pages you give us the equivalent of a whore at a Jimmy Swaggart convention (ie. you blow everything to hell)! Pud the pervert and the unknown old geezer iced...Oscar pretty much the same in his mind...Jaka and Rick apprehended...and Cerebus still out getting paint...fuck!
Y'know, this makes things a lot more ominous. I kinda assumed since no one actually saw "Most Holy" come back from the Final Ascension they'd think him a goner, but, fuck, it looks like the cirinists are hot for his little furry ass (non-sexually, that is.).
And we still don't know who/where the third aardvark is; at least I don't.
Yeah, I know this one ain't typed either, but I just shot about $30 so I could lengthen my Cerebus run (is that a freakin' sexual innuendo, or what?) from #49 on up. So now I get to go backwards and shell out more dough.
Oh, and I've given up dating one chick and am dating a bunch of 'em. Older ones, and rich, too (HA!)
...Tarim!
J. Brandt Dilworth
4600-B Lavista Ct.
Raleigh, NC
USA 27604

★★★★★★★★★★

Hey Dave,
What gives? *Forbidden Planet*, the nicest, bestest, and onliest comic shop here in Dublin is selling *Cerebus* for 1R£2 despite the UK £1 on the cover...and the exchange, thanks to Ms. Maggie, is practically one to one!
This sucks!
Now like any junkie I have to recognize that it's a sellers' market, and maybe it's just that they're trying to pay their rent—aren't we all? — But, Dave, doesn't it look like somebody's taking our hard-earned pennies away from us?
What's that, Dave? "Cheap at half the

price"?
Praps, if it were you as was gettin' it.
Warm and fuzzy regards:
Michael Everson
15 Lower Camden Street,
Dublin 2,
Ireland

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,
Last week I bought a single Cerebus issue for $80 that I never intend to read and would NEVER even fancy the notion of selling. My common sense keeps blurting "A fool and his money soon part" in my mind's ear, but I cannot resist the importance of following my bliss (thus quoth Joseph Campbell) and completing the full run of your saga. In any medium, your work is a classic. The powerful prose in Jaka's Story is but one example of your inexhaustible talents. Cerebus is one of the few things that is all the more dramatic when read depressed; it's something to be enjoyed with a good six-pack or a lousy bottle of wine. Will Cerebus ever be pleased with what he's got? Yeah, right. Nietzche would define Cerebus as a superman, but with a trace of sentimentality. Well anyway Dave, may your epic be remembered as long as Beowulf, but without the painful side-effects of ennui.
M*A*S*H, Python, the Dead, Proust and Cerebus make sense and nonsense of this world.
Sincerely,
Aaron Ford
2450 Wallace Rd.
Salem, OR
USA 97304

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave Sim-
"Jaka's Story" is an interesting step in the evolution of Cerebus as both a novel and a character; how bold a move it is to have a number of issues where Cerebus doesn't even appear. If there were times when fans would complain that the creator doesn't know what he's doing, this would certainly cap them all. But this story is crucial to you as an artist, because you are growing from yourself, and the result is wondrous. It is such a drastic change from the tone of Cerebus #26-111, which is essentially one novel in itself in two parts, becoming a somber aftereffect of Cerebus' mid-life-crisis-on-the-moon. But there are a number of plots yet to be even marginally explained aren't there, such as the Elf. Where is she and how does she link to Cerebus' higher self? I always go back to that panel in the election issue, the page we see each person's thoughts and Elf's is Cerebus in a radiant glow like hers, Flying. Cute on the surface, but there's something else in there, that Cerebus might actually attain this quality, something akin to the Elf's immortality and flight. And who is the third aardvark? Was it the Lion of Serrea? Did the Bug die? And why would Elrod become Dead Albino after he died? and with Cirin now in control of Iest, is Astoria dead? no, she can't be, can she?
She's to be the mother of Cerebus' child.
Yours in awaitment,
Brett Siler
4407 Thackeray Pl, NE
USA 98105

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,
I was bored Friday night so I hyp-motized myself to forget where everything on campus is. Unfortunately, I was stupid to do this right before finals and now I have to re-learn where everything is quickly. I could be in big trouble. Weird.
Quick, Dave! You better get over here right away! I lost weight over night and I'm down to 25 pounds! Weird.
My friend Tony was also bored Friday night so he buried himself under all the stuff in his closet. I had to call his girlfriend to help get him out. Weird.
Wait...phew. No immediate cause for alarm-I put on some weight, and I'm now back up to 36 pounds. Weird.
Tony and I decided to be bored together Saturday afternoon so we built a giant work of modern art out of everything in our kitchen and living room. I've enclosed a copy of a picture of me and our work of art. Weird.
Coming to you from Bucketfuls of sickness and horror in an otherwise meaningless life,
Dave Katzman a.k.a. Mulch Spackling
236 E. 18th Avenue
Colmbus, OH
USA 43201
P.S Good luck kicking the doobage habit. You must be going through hell.

★★★★★★★★★★

Culture Capital Columbus, Ohio gives us another one. Katzman (right) and sculpture.

Dear Dave,
I was reading the Bible last night, and when I came across the following passage, I thought of Cerebus:
"Happy shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock!"
Psalm 137
Gimmie that old time religion.
Rick Norwood
Box 336
Mountain Home, TN
USA 37684

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave (Cerebus) Sim,
Did I say threesome? Maybe what I really meant to say was...Oh really! Did you think it would stop there? It's just begun!
The kitten says "Hello". She's such a delight. It makes things a whole lot different around here now that she's making as much a mess of the place as I am.
It's really cute! Little black kitten with a *really ODD* little whitish, triangular patch of fur on her right elbow, clipped left ear, and chameleon eyes. "They're not blue.", as I tell some people. I call her 'Yin Yin'.
This kitten showed up in my back yard just when I was leaving the house to go read some Taoist text in my apartment for a Humanities class that I had the next day. I've always been a sucker for cats, and after a lot of goading, I got a chance to pet her. She never left me, and with out even asking, my parents told this little woesome that I could keep her. Joy of joys! Shredded 'Levis'! (surgery)!
I'm playing 'Yes' right now. Well, its actually a Jon Anderson solo. I'm very fond of this particular LP, "Olias of Sunhillow". It's not that easy to find. I got it as a present from a friend of mine a while back, when I least expected it, of all things. I adore this man's lyrical style! It makes no sense at first, but allow yourself the time to get into it, and I think that it could be some of the most beautiful stuff you ever heard, even if his voice does ride the nerves a little. That's part of the joy! Though I do consider this the album that gave Roger Dean 'diabetes'. It was made with him in mind after all.
Did you know that there's more to 'Pink' than "Floyd"?
Enough said.
Love you, earth-pig advocate.
Amy Hill

Tucson, AZ
Kiss Kiss
Save the Rainforests! Save the water! Save Ass!

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Mr. Sim & co.,
Re: the letter of Mr. Mathew Bates, printed in *Cerebus* issue 129.
I see no problem with having one's name printed in the letters page of *Cerebus*.
Yours,
Anonymous.

★★★★★★★★★★

Greetings and Aloha,
It's been cloudy and rainy here for the past two weeks. I wouldn't mind so much if I didn't just get fired from my job. Such being the case, I've not much to do. I admit I've been spoiled. Take away the sunny days and temperate, clear starry evenings and I'm at a loss. And even though I might have tons of free time on my hands, I can't expect my friends to drop whatever they're busy with just to play with me.
In times of despair, write your favourite artist. Not that I expect any great words of wisdom from you to lift me from my depression. You've never made any claims to being an advice columnist, which is hunky-dory with me.
So any way, there I was with all this spare time, so I decide to reread all my Cerebuses, from my Swords to my latest issue of Jaka's Story (which, for some reason, says November on it when the local comic shops just got it last month. Don't feel bad, Dave. You just write at whatever rate you're comfortable with and I'll keep buying.) I'm not going to go off on some tangent about loving your work and being with you until issue 300. That's understood.
With that having being said, something just occured to me. (Other than my lack of ability to spell correctly, I mean). Why am I writing to you? If not for advice, if not to compliment you, then *what?*
And just as effortlessly, the answer comes to me. Just to babble. Pure social interaction. All my friends are too busy, and I can't understand. I feel like a gaijin in my own house. Sad but true.
I imagine you're thinking "Why don't you write someone else, you must have friends you can write to." Well I do, and I already did. I just felt like babbling on a little longer. Talking to yourself gets old after a while, though I am getting quite accomplished at staring thoughtfully into the distance.
But my Sonic Youth album needs to be flipped over (yes, some people still use vinyl), there's a quart of ice cream calling my name, and there's some Dewar's scotch on my shelf that looks like it needs to be drunk. I think I need to be drunk, too. After that, I suppose I'll reread Bill Sienkiewicz's Stray Toasters, if I can find where I left them. Then I'll think of how pointless this letter was. But, of course, there's nothing I can do about it now. Thanks for listening (or reading, or whatever).
Mahalo Nui Loa,
Raymond Sipin
2017 Mahaoo Place
Honolulu, Hawaii
USA 96819

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,
The box of tricks on which I am writing this letter is try ing to tell me that your name is actually Dace Sib, and that your publication Cereals comes from Oneiric, Canada. Mind you this is the same machine that a week ago was trying to convince me that the author of "Thus spoke Zabaglione" was a man known as Freakish Nieces. (Honest!) Who'd trust a fucking computer, or a funking one, as it would have me describe it?
Anyway, all I really wanted to tell you was that the bloke who modelled for Epstein (if I meant Epsilon, I'd write Epsilon) statue of St. Michael (whoever heard of St. Micelle?) in Coventry, featured at the back of Cereals #125, is an old flame of my mum's, so had things turned out differently that might have been my Dad gracing the pages of your illustrious magazine.
Love,
Ben Walker
18, Fane Road
Old Marston
Oxford
OX3 OSA
England
P.S. Sorry to see your replies to the old l.o.c.s. disappear, but I guess you're a very busy man with an awful lot of work to do. (172 issues as I write this, to be precise.) As long as you keep up your gob-smackingly good work on Jaka's Story and its sequels, though, I shall be able to live without your ready repartee adding to the fascinating debates on masturbation on the letters page. (Should there be a comma there?) In fact if it meant that we didn't have to put up with any more of those agonizing "Dave, I've just split up with my girlfriend "fucking bitches, all of them" letters (I quote from #128), I could happily live without the letters altogether.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,
Well, I was going to say somethin' meaningful about the book, but Damn, Dave, she left me! I mean, she's been scared shitless for three weeks that I was gonna fuck her over and *SHE DUMPS ME*!! Fuck! All women are bitches, just some of them occasionally act nice (except for Cassandra and Connie [sounds like an 80's sitcom, dunnit?] who are *always* sweethearts!). Get this, she says I'm *too nice!* Ha!! Did I argue that time she paid for thé pizza? No! Did I rob a bank to get her roses for Valentine's Day? No! Did I ever let her come before me? N...okay, there was that one time, but I swear she was, like, frigid or

somethin'!
Shit.
Look, I know this ain't typed but I just blew all my cash on getting the bitch roses (2 days before she dumps me! She don't let the flowers die, man!) getting some of the cat's guts ripped out, the Cerebus TB, and Jaka's Story 16. Ok, yeah, I think I did buy some food the other day and there was that six pack of Foster's, but I gotta stay alive at least until #300.
Come to think of it, Cassandra never did answer that letter and I'll bet Connie'd say no to casual conversation over a pot of tea, so, well, shit...
Chicks, man...
J. Brandt Dilworth
4600-B Lavista Ct.
Raleigh, NC
USA 27604
P.S. By the by, Cerebus is probably the best written work this side o'Billy Shakespeare and best drawn since Adams did Batman (Dammit, I wasn't gonna mention that pointy-eared fag!).

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave
I've got a Structural Design Project due tomorrow, as well as an exam in Soil Mechanics. I really don't feel like doing any work, though.
When you want to eat but aren't hungry, or when you want to sleep but aren't tired, you're sexually frustrated. This is according to Matt Simmonds.
The Ramones sold out before I could get tickets, the dryer left my clothes all soggy, and I'm sitting around listening to the Smiths.
Soil Mechanics sucks, anyways.
Kurt A. Kress
University of Connecticut
407 Kingston
Storrs, CT
USA 06269

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,
I only thought of writing to you because earlier this evening I read issue #129 and was mightily fulfilled-those that find Jaka's Story boring would probably fall asleep in the Louvre (and probably couldn't *pronounce* it either) or are the types who call the Beatles mediocre. If I may digress for a moment-that is what my manager at work said yesterday about the Beatles:
"The Beatles were a mediocre talent at best. For the last 25 years, we, society, have been force-fed their dippy love songs and bland anthems until we're about to puke."
Whats up *her* ass, Dave? She really pissed me off, but she is my manager, so all I could do was sigh, which she said reminded her of an elementary school teacher who sighed deeply whenever the class was in big trouble.
I guess she got my point.
Anyway, I've been writing an essay for a campus-wide contest at the J.C. I attend. It's about the environmental crisis. I'm not a half-bad writer, Dave, and I've loaded the damn thing with clever anecdotes, pithy observations, and serio-comic allusions to the Bush Administration. I might win this contest, Dave and that's what I'm writing you about. The 1st prize is $300.00, and that's the real reason I entered the contest in the first place: for the money. I *calculated* this essay to win. I feel a little bad because I'm an English major who hopes to someday write a novel that is *half* as good as *The Great Gatsby*, and here I am prostituting a heartless, contrived piece of political balderdash just so I can complete my collection of Pink Floyd CD's. Am I violating an artist's code? Am I a total moral vagrant *OR* am I an incredibly shrewd visionary with a slant towards exploiting the market? Which is worse? Do you ever have these dilemmas? (Not that *Cerebus* is exploiting, although you *do* milk those reprints for every last cent)
What do you think of Rush? Or at least, of Neil Peart? You should know that a lot of people I know who like *Cerebus* also like Rush. What's the connection? I happen to think that Neil Peart is to rock lyrics what *Cerebus* is to comics.
Let me know.
Bye.
Jay
196 Cleveland Ab #5
San Jose, CA
USA 95128

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,
Well, Dude, it's been a little over a hundred issues now. Since I started reading *Cerebus*, that is. And it's been nearly that long since I've written to remind you that you're a fucking genius. Plenty of other folks have taken up the slack in my absence, however. So I'm not gonna waste time buttressing an ego that's among the most-stroked in the field. I'm gonna waste it this way....
If you won a contest, on, say MTV (not that you watch it or anything... just suppose)... And for the prize, they would arrange for *any five* celebrities, *your* choice, to attend a party at your home... Who would you invite?
Personally, my choices would be David Letterman, Jimmy Page, Deborah Harry, Amber Lynn, and Dave Sim.
Sounds like fun? Eh?
You bet .
Howard S. Jones
P.O. Box 12608
Gainesville, Florida
USA 32604

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave
I just finished an extremely long letter to you.Luckily I sobered up a little and mailed you this instead. I have one question: Do you plan to give Cerebus as detailed a childhood as Jaka?
As soon as a spot opens up I'll send you a Single Page.
Your Mega-Big fan (no lie),
Terry Harper
4255 Tamarus St. #429
Las Vegas, NV
USA 89119

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,
Sorry about the shitty paper. I had to tear up a composition book.
Okay. So there's this incredible babe, right? Beautiful, intelligent, etc. We realize a mutual attraction, and it looks like the start of something really froopy. Suddenly, she comes up with how she doesn't want a heavy involvement. I'm shocked and dazed: what the fuck? Anyway, I say to myself, "wait a while: she's worth it." And proceed to do just that.
Suddenly (once again), I notice from listening, looking, and paying attention that all is not well in Lon-don-town. I realize that one of my friends is leaning her way. Once again, I'm shocked; what the fuck, Part II. I mean, me and this dude have tripped together: you'd think that would count for something; he knew the scene. I feel like breaking his god-damned, motherfucking, shit-assed, cunt-faced, cocksucking, weasel-eyed, back-stubbing neck. But I don't; when you come right down to it, I don't really have the right. But, Dave? I'm starting not to care... the violence would do me good.
Dave? What the fuck should I do?
Yours in misery,
An Honest Man, K.S.C
P.S. Cerebus is incredible. You're the best.
P.P.S. Gerhard too.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave:
I had just finished watching "Newton's Apple," a public broadcasting program on Channel 2 in Minneapolis. On this particular show, 2-25-90, they had a segment on Aardvarks. This aardvark lives in Ohio. They went on to explain the habits of the earth-pig, telling us that they are in class all to themselves because of their teeth. An earth-pig cannot bite someone because their teeth are located on the sides of their mouth. Five on top and bottom, left and right for a total of 20 teeth. Anyways, they then

explained that the primary diet of an aardvark is termites.
That was when a ton of bricks hit me! "Termites! My God! That is what Dave is doing!"
My roomate asked what I meant and so I explained to Kris that in Cerebus, the primary deity is named TARIM: and the followers are TARIMITES. A rather unique play on words from TERMITES to TARIMITES. I was impressed. I mentioned it to my other roomate, Todd. He is the one who got me started on Cerebus just a few weeks ago ... from the beginning to Jaka's Story #15.
Yours in America,
Paul C. Rustad
600 North Van Buren Trail
Hopkins, MN
USA 55343
P.S. Jasa (aka JR) howdy! Caught you by surprise, didn't I? Say "Hi" to the Kid for me.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,
First off I just want to say that Cerebus is by far my favorite piece of illustrated literature. You've set a precedent and a glorious example of how much potential there is in this medium. I buy multiple copies of every issue, and freely recommend your work to friends and acquaintances. I"ll be watching you to 300 and beyond, and enjoying every page.
Okay, base flattery aside, there are two subjects I'd like to comment on. First is your continuing attempt to control your weed intake, as mentioned in your president's column in 126. I know where you're coming from. I smoked pot constantly for nine years, cigarettes for seven. However, I have successfully conquered both addictions, and thought that my experiences might prove helpful. Firstly, I don't think I would have controlled these habits without a couple of years of psychotherapy. My therapist never encouraged me to quit, but she did encourage to stop beating myself up about my inablitity to quit. This is, I think, an important point. No one is going to quit until they're ready. If you want to keep on smoking, go right ahead, feel good about it if you can. Don't force yourself. It'll happen when it's ready.
One morning about a year ago I woke up not wanting a cigarette. When I smoked them after this they tasted like shit. At this point, to aid me in quitting, I enlisted the help of my physician, who prescribed nicotine gun, and this was instrumental in my success. However, I made up for quitting cigarettes by smoking about five times more pot than before.
Until just about a month ago this high pot intake continued. I remember you saying many issues ago something like "you can only do so much of a thing before it's not going to do it for you anymore. Nature of the beast, kids." Truer words were never spoken. But weed is familiar territory for us, Dave. It's comfortable, and people like to be comfortable. My anxiety around coming down was high indeed. But it happened. I realized that getting high wasn't making me feel any better at all, and then coming down became a kind of adventure, a high in itself. It still is. I can't believe how much more energy I have. As you intimated in that recent president's letter, diversion is a key to success in these things. With cigarettes I did some travelling (and replaced them with pot). With pot I've been reading, reading voraciously. Reading was never one of my favorite things to do while stoned; it's a lot more fun now. but, as I mentioned before, I don't think I would have quit either one without going through some therapy, which has enriched my life and enabled me to feel better about myself, which is what it's all about, isn't it? The therapy I have been involved in is deterministic, that is, it postulates that the personality is formed through environmental influences early in life, and the gods of the early life environment are MOM and DAD. This is a scientific approach. There are no vague archetypes, no animalistic drives of the type Freud espoused. Everything happens as a result of what came before. The logical extension of this is that there is no such thing as free will! It is illusory. We make all our decisions based on our previous experiences. We learn to make decisions. Our basic emotional and intellectual framework is created by our primary care-giver, usually mom, and there is no such thing as a perfect mom. Children are abused as a matter of course in our society, by everyone. How many times have you seen a young child being treated with respect, as though they were a guest? Probably not very many. But this is the way we should treat our children if we want them to grow into healthy adults who respect themselves and others. I believe that redefining our ideas about child-rearing will become vital to the survival of our society. So don't be too hard on yourself for having a hard time quitting pot or whatever. You're doing the best you can. We're all, always, doing the best we can.
These ideas are controversial. Many people, perhaps even you yourself feel very threatened by the idea that their parents did anything but love them. You can take it or leave it, obviously. Just thought I'd toss it out there, this evolving perspective on people and relationships. The other topic I'd like to write about is related. It is "why is Cerebus so damn angry all the time?" Because his life is hard. But the lives of others are hard too, even harder, and they're not angry as Cerebus is angry. Of course, I apply the above behavioural theories to my thought of Cerebus. Who were his parents? What were they like? They created Cerebus, and gave him his personality. I think the poor little guy suffered some serious abuse, and my hearts aches for him. You have given some clues as to the nature of Cerebus' parents. first there is Claremont's statement on page 105 of Church & State vol. 1 that Cerebus has "the demeanor of an orphaned puppy and a need for a mother-substitute upon which I could float his holiness' trading fleet." Then, in issue 77 (I love the dream sequences, by the way. Those who say they don't advance the plot are full of shit. They give great insight into Cerebus' character) on pages 3&4 a young Cerebus encounters the fat woman in a half-sphere, whom I assume to be his mother, and she is full of reprobation and abuse. Cerebus is frightened of her and runs away. We don't see Cerebus run away very often, so this is to me evidence that Cerebus fears his mother greatly. She must have done something(s) to inspire this fear. Then issue 86 (one of my favorites), after Cerebus whulps up his whiskey-codeine refreshment, his character is transformed. "Cerebus never feels really good" he says. This implies that Cerebus is, deep down, like the rest of us. He wants to enjoy life. Finally, in *Cerebus Jam*, in the president's note, in reference to the Squinteye story. you write that Cerebus "has just run away from home for the first time." Kids don't run away from parents that treat them well. Looking at the jam issue now I notice references to other stories of his youth, but I don't think I've seen them. Are they in Swords issues or what? I don't have any of those, preferring instead the large bound volumes. Guess I'll have to look at the beat-up used Swords copies that are at the local comic shops more closely.
Anyway, what I'm really wondering here is what you think of Cerebus' upbringing? I don't expect you to give away any secrets, so I guess all I mean to say is that I hope we get to see more of Cerebus' inner psyche and/or childhood. I'm very interested. I sort of hope that Cerebus will one day see that his overwhelming rage is meant for his mother, though I doubt this will ever happen.
Love Jaka's Story, by the way. Quite a change of pace, though I must admit I'm looking forward to the day when the book will concentrate on the title character again. Keep up the good work. I, several of my friends, and even my dad are very appreciative.
Until next time,
Stan the Bat
Cambridge, MA

★★★★★★★★★★

'There are
no
war-like peoples;
only
war-like leaders.'

Ralph
Bunche